

NORTH NIBLEY PARISH COUNCIL: ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016/17

The Council is pleased to present its Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2017.

Details of all Parish Council activities can be found on the Parish Council website at: www.northnibleyparishcouncil.org.uk/. The new website was launched on 1st December 2016 to replace the Stroud District Authority maintained site which was discontinued from the same date. The new site has seen a steady increase in user numbers during 2017 to include a good number of repeat visitors. The design and startup costs were covered by a Transparency Fund successfully tendered for by the previous, now retired, Clerk.

Summary of Parish Council Activities

Your Parish Council has been active again this year working on behalf of the community. Following the sale of the Breakheart Hill land in the summer of 2016 the Council considered 'options at its autumn finance meeting for improvements to council assets to include the Wotton Road cemetery and memorial garden. The council continues to be active in representing the interests of parishioners and has continued to monitor the installation of fibre broadband services for the Parish and contributed to the Planning consultation on the future of the two Parish BT phone boxes.

Parish Council Activities in more detail

The Council:

- Met monthly throughout the year;
- Made representations to British Telecom and Clifton Brown, MP for the Cotswolds, about the delays in improving broadband services to the Parish;
- Awarded grants, totalling £1,800, to support local organisations in providing services to people in the Parish;
- Has continued to regularly contribute to "On The Edge" as a means of keeping parishioners informed of the Council's activities;
- Commented upon new Planning applications to Stroud District Council;
- Made considerable improvements to the cemetery and memorial garden to include hedge and tree trimming and cutting back grass around memorial plaques;
- Organised professional treatment of mole diggings in the cemetery and dealt with tree where necessary;
- Received parishioner letters of thanks for the improvements in the cemetery area;
- Organised and was supported by volunteers during the annual "Village Clean-Up Day" on 1^o April 2017;
- Liaised with the outgoing and then the new Village Agent who provide support to older residents aged over 50. The new Village Agent is Jane Creed. Her contact details are on the Parish Council website;
- Was successful in its application for Community Speed Watch equipment to the Police and Crime Commissioner. A speeder gun, hi Vis jackets, and tripod have been ordered;
- Carried out ivy clearance and repairs to the wall of St Martin's churchyard;
- Finalised the sale of the Council's land at Breakheart Hill and secured an accurate final reading for the water bill for the water trough on the land. The Council asset register was updated after the sale;
- Is due to receive assistance from a new internal auditor appointment this spring;

- Following the comprehensive audit of the condition of focal footpaths between autumn 2015 and spring 2016, referred the condition of some footpaths to the County Footpaths Officer and requested home owners hedge trim a neighbouring footpath in the Innocks estate area;
- Carried out one substantial repair to the boundary wall of St Martin's churchyard and arranged for the treatment of ivy;
- Launched an archiving project. This has entailed a review of the hundred or so Parish Council records and documents going back to the early 1900s. The first batch of records were archived after Parish Council approval at the Gloucestershire County Records office;
- Has reviewed financial management options but agreed not to pursue the option of on line banking for Parish Council accounts due to concerns about security;
- Made a contribution to the regional debate on options for devolution through the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils;
- Renewed its membership of the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils to access expertise, training provision, and networking events;
- Contributed to the successful 1st October 2016 Tyndale memorial celebration event held on its land;
- Notified parishioners of key local events to include road closures with details posted on Parish noticeboards and Council website;
- Councillors worked with groups of volunteers to clear extensive ragwort from The Knoll.

Parish Council Property. The Council owns land throughout the Parish.

- 1) Land at Nibley Knoll. The Council's 6 acres at Nibley Knoll continue to be managed by the Nibley Knoll Trust to ensure the long term future of the Hill for the Community.
- 2) The Cemetery. Further work has been carried out to maintain the Cemetery in accordance with the long term Maintenance Plan. Mrs King has continued in her role as Burial Clerk and worked hard to assist local families deal with their arrangements.
- 3) Jubilee Recreation Field. The Council, through their representative on the Trust (Mr Keith Larkin), has continued to work with the Recreation Field Trust.
- 4) The Closed Churchyard at St Martin's Church, The Council, having taken over responsibility for the Closed Churchyard at St. Martin's Church in 2014, have continued to carry out essential maintenance and repairs to the churchyard.

Parish Council Finances

In 2016/17 the Council's Precept was not increased and remained at the same level as the previous financial year at £18,040. The council retains sufficient reserves to meet its commitments under its risk management policy and also additional reserves to enable some key new projects be considered to include improvements to the fabric of the memorial garden.

Looking ahead to 2017/18

The Council will continue to work with the Gloucestershire Police to address the concerns of parishioners about the speed of traffic entering the Village. It is planned that a Community Speed Watch Group be established with the initial training provided in the spring 2017.

Will continue to explore options for Affordable Housing within the Parish and will communicate any key development to parishioners through the council website and OTE reports.

Will continue to monitor the condition of the cemetery and memorial garden with a view to some further improvements,

Is investigating signage options to encourage the reserving of a parking space especially for visitors to the cemetery and memorial garden in the layby area on Wotton Rd.

Parishioners are welcome to attend the monthly Council meetings held in the Village Hall on the first Monday of each month, although normally the second Monday if the first is a Bank Holiday.

Mr David Purnell.

Chairman of North Nibley Parish Council

3rd April 2017